
Seat Belt Laws Fact Sheet

Individuals should retain the freedom and responsibility to make choices affecting their own safety and the safety of their families.

Mandatory seatbelt laws inevitably lead to heavy handed enforcement practices and onerous penalties.

First it was child restraint laws because “the children are not capable of making these decisions themselves and too many parents are irresponsible.” Next it was “secondary” enforcement of belt laws, just as a means to “encourage” the use of seatbelts.

Now fines are being increased and “primary” enforcement is giving police the excuse to pull anyone and everyone over on the pretext of a seatbelt violation.

Thousands of roadblocks have been erected to force compliance with seatbelt laws. Violation points toward suspension of driver licenses and photo/video enforcement are the next likely escalations of this process.

No one argues the merit of seat belt usage.

However, the government should not dictate to motorists that they must wear a seat belt. The premise of mandatory seat belt laws is that motorists are incapable of being educated on the value of seat belts and unable to exercise personal judgement concerning their personal safety.

A key component of good safety legislation is that such legislation shall “do no harm.” No person should be compelled by government, no matter how well intentioned, to take action that harms themselves or others.

There is ample proof that in certain accidents, people were more seriously injured or killed because they wore a seat belt. Mandatory seat belt law proponents occasionally acknowledge that some people do die because of seat belts, but those fatalities are casually dismissed as “insignificant.”

There is ample proof, that in certain accidents, people have survived only because a seat belt was not used. In 30% of fatal accidents, where a person is ejected from the vehicle, the person remaining in the vehicle is the fatality.

In a free society, if someone is injured or killed because they freely choose to use or not use a seat belt, that is a personal tragedy, as it is with all other kinds of freely chosen risks in life.

However, if a person is injured or killed because the government forced that person to use a certain device against their will, that is an unacceptable tragedy.

Whether mandatory seat belt laws or any other “protect us from ourselves” regulation, this isn’t a legitimate function of government.

In conclusion, mandatory seat belt laws increase motorist harassment, erode personal freedom, and set the stage for more onerous and punitive governmental measures.